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Chairman:

Mr. PETRESKI

(The former Yugoslav Republic
of Macedonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/190-E/1995/73)

1. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that his delegation supported the views on the item expressed by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development presented challenges that called for an immediate response from individuals, Governments, international financial organizations and the international community as a whole. Because the world's population continued to grow quickly and per capita international cooperation was declining, the financing of the Programme of Action was a matter of grave concern. The donor community placed considerable emphasis on the mobilization by countries of their domestic resources. He wished to underscore the importance of complementary resources from donor nations and financial institutions and agreed with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that a report on such resource flows should be prepared on an annual basis.

2. Given the sensitive nature of population issues, it was essential when dealing with initiatives and projects, to take fully into account the sovereign right of each State to formulate and implement its own policies and to ensure the inalienable right to development. Those factors must prevail in decisions relating to the financing of any initiative. His Government was committed to implementing the Programme of Action and had established a National Commission on Population and Development which was responsible for follow-up action to the Conference.

3. His delegation favoured the establishment of a separate executive board for UNFPA in the belief that it would provide greater flexibility to, and enhance the governance of, the Fund and thereby prove more beneficial to developing countries. It was a matter of concern that the joint United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA Executive Board was expected to devote 10 days, at most, to population issues during the current year. Furthermore, the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be expanded to 53 States and the Population Division should be strengthened in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities arising out of the implementation of the Programme of Action. He underscored the importance which the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean attached to the development of initiatives within the scope of the Programme of Action and their belief that their efforts should be complemented by increased support from the international community. The region lagged far behind in the allocation of concessional financial resources.

4. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that his country, which had a large population, attached considerable importance to the question of population and its implications for economic growth and development. His delegation was grateful to the Executive Director of UNFPA for her tireless efforts to conceptualize some of the basic parameters of population growth and their impact on society. It also appreciated the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Implementation of the Programme of Action and associated itself with the

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statement made by the representative of the Philippines in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

5. In keeping with its belief that managed population growth should complement and serve as a basis for sustainable development, his delegation endorsed the objectives of General Assembly resolution 49/128 and hoped that it would be fully implemented. While it was true that national Governments had the primary responsibility for the formulation and implementation of population policies, the support of the international community was essential for their implementation. His delegation therefore hoped that the specialized agencies would ensure a collaborative and coordinated approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

6. His delegation supported the enlargement of the Commission on Population and Development to 53 members, not only in the light of the ongoing restructuring of the United Nations system but also to ensure the broader participation of Member States, and of developing countries in particular.

7. Mr. HADJI KARIM DJABBARY (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the International Conference on Population and Development had successfully reconciled divergent views on the interrelationship between population, development and the environment stemming from diverse religious, ethical and cultural positions. The full and expeditious implementation of the Programme of Action depended on the provision of substantial external resources to supplement the mobilization of domestic resources, as well as equal consideration and treatment of all the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action. That approach should guide the activities of all entities concerned with the implementation of the Programme of Action.

8. Turning to paragraphs 8-10 of document A/50/190, he said that his delegation welcomed the convening of consultations on the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action and believed that the resources to be generated by that process or through other mechanisms should be specifically devoted to the implementation of relevant programmes in all developing countries.

9. His delegation agreed that the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be increased to 53 States in order to reflect the reforms under way in the United Nations system and to improve the effectiveness of its activities. It also agreed that there was sufficient reason to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA.

10. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) expressed the hope that the question of whether the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be enlarged would be resolved by the end of the year. His delegation did not believe that it was necessary to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA, since the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board's work was proceeding smoothly. Some streamlining was needed to ensure effective working relationships among the various entities participating in population-related activities.

11. At its current session, the Second Committee should help to finalize organizational arrangements for updated United Nations activities in the

population field. His delegation looked forward to a full discussion of the progress accomplished at all levels, with an emphasis on substantive questions, including new measures to be taken with respect to the harmonization and monitoring of population activities. The Commission on Population and Development should concentrate on preparing practical recommendations for improving international cooperation on population issues. His delegation endorsed the suggestion by UNFPA that reports should be prepared each year on the financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national and international levels. The progress made by all partners involved in the field of population and development, both within and outside the United Nations system, should be evaluated regularly in order to permit the timely adjustment of policies with a view to a more balanced and integrated approach to assessing progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

12. His delegation attached considerable importance to more productive interaction between the Commission on Population and Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with the Inter-Agency Task Force and welcomed the coordination efforts already made to that end. The Task Force should ensure the transparency of its work and should maintain close contact with Member States. He underscored the important role which the Task Force played as the Organization's link to partners outside the United Nations system.

13. He emphasized the importance of clear national reporting requirements for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action, and noted that the main role of the General Assembly in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development should be to bring deficiencies and problems to light and devise appropriate recommendations to eliminate them.

14. Mr. OKANIWA (Japan) said that his delegation considered the adoption of the Programme of Action a significant achievement. Together with the results of other recent United Nations conferences, the Programme of Action could substantially improve the quality of life for all humankind. The General Assembly, in particular, had a specific role to play in maintaining the momentum which the International Conference on Population and Development had generated by highlighting both the progress in and the obstacles to achieving the Programme's goals.

15. He supported the recent UNFPA Executive Board decision to focus on reproductive health, population policy and advocacy. UNFPA should reinforce its capability in line with its resources. Furthermore, the emphasis on South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, was of particular importance and the efforts of UNFPA in that regard should be strengthened.

16. It would be premature to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA since the advantages did not justify the consequent increase in expenses. He noted with satisfaction that the Commission on Population and Development was being revitalized, and said that, secretariat support for the Commission and other follow-up activities needed to be reinforced. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the increase in personnel for the Population Division provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

17. His delegation believed that a decision concerning the composition of the Commission was being unduly delayed in the Economic and Social Council; it was imperative to ensure the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Commission. Financial resources to ensure the follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development should be mobilized from all available sources. Japan, for its part, planned to provide a total of US\$ 3 billion for population and AIDS as part of its official development assistance for the seven-year period from 1994 to 2000.

18. Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that the strong reaffirmation by the Fourth World Conference on Women of many of the concepts adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development should strengthen the resolve of nations to implement the Platform for Action adopted at the former Conference and the Programme of Action adopted at the latter. Action to support the empowerment of women was important in its own right and also integral to stabilizing population growth. Action must be taken at all levels in order to translate those documents into reality.

19. Her delegation did not believe that enlarging the membership of the Commission on Population and Development would enhance its effectiveness, since the quality of the representatives sent to the Commission was more important than their number. Nor did it believe that there was any need to establish a separate executive board for UNFPA. The joint UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board was working very effectively and UNFPA was doing an excellent job.

20. Mr. LOZANO (Mexico), referring to the requirements for international assistance and financial flows to implement the Programme of Action, emphasized the importance of the follow-up work to be carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development vis-à-vis the progress achieved in meeting financial aid targets. He reaffirmed that the manner in which resources were allocated to various sectors must depend on the social, economic, cultural and political realities in each country and on its priorities.

21. His delegation favoured the establishment of a separate executive board for the United Nations Population Fund since that would enable the Fund more effectively to implement the Programme of Action and related activities and to provide technical and financial assistance.

22. In devising a new strategy for allocating resources in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action, UNFPA must comply strictly with the provisions of paragraph 14.14 of the Programme of Action on the criteria for allocation of external financial resources for population activities, the most significant of which was the principle of the universality of international cooperation of the United Nations system.

23. His delegation was in favour of enlarging the membership of the Commission on Population and Development to 53 in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities more effectively. Recognizing the interdependence of population, development and environmental issues, his Government had recently launched a five-year national population plan, which was an integral part of the country's economic and social development strategies and programmes.

24. Mr. TANASESCU (Romania) said that since implementation at the national level was crucial to meet the goals set at the International Conference on Population and Development, the national reports which had been submitted by some countries during the preparatory process of the Conference, could be used as a basis for the adoption of national programmes consistent with the Programme of Action. Those countries which had not yet presented such national reports should be assisted to do so.

25. Implementation of such national programmes should be based on three key elements: first, cooperation between the various governmental departments, which required precise delimitation of the responsibilities of each department; second, partnership between government and non-governmental organizations; and third, periodic assessment of the results. Concerning the latter aspect, there was a need to improve the statistical instruments. In that regard, common studies undertaken by the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Population and Development could indicate the most appropriate statistical indicators that reflected the new trends and processes.

26. Regional cooperation and assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations were crucial to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the regional level. In that regard, he drew attention to a workshop which Romania had hosted earlier in the year on the implementation of the Programme of Action in countries with economies in transition from Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States. The workshop had revealed certain serious problems in family planning and reproductive health, two crucial areas where the countries of the region needed assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations. As a result, the Executive Director of UNFPA had proposed and the joint UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had approved, the establishment of two UNFPA offices, in Bucharest and Tirana, which would channel assistance in those two areas to countries in the region. The office in Romania would also monitor UNFPA activities in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine.

27. Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea) noting the commendable efforts which had already been made to implement the Programme of Action, said that his delegation endorsed the terms of reference and mandates of the Commission on Population and Development; the topic-oriented and prioritized multi-year work programme was an effective approach. Discussions concerning the establishment of a separate executive board for UNFPA should, in his delegation's opinion, take place within the context of ongoing efforts to restructure the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields.

28. The Republic of Korea attached great importance to the global population issue and had made efforts to increase its contribution in that regard. After the Cairo Conference, it had sponsored jointly with UNFPA a population symposium on gender preference for children in South and East Asia. In cooperation with UNFPA, his Government planned to host another symposium on population and ageing in the first half of 1996.

29. Mr. AGONA (Uganda), noting that full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action would help improve the quality of life of Uganda's people, said that his Government had already adopted a national population policy and that a plan of action would soon be implemented.

30. His country was gravely concerned by the spread of HIV/AIDS and was doing its utmost to fight the pandemic. At the same time it believed that UNFPA had a significant contribution to make in that regard, both within its own competence and as a partner in the joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. Given the nature of the pandemic, his delegation called for more effective collaboration on population information, reproductive rights and health education and communication within the overall context of the Cairo Programme of Action.

31. Regarding the institutional arrangements for the follow-up of the Conference, he said that since it was generally agreed that UNFPA had an important role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action, it should also be accepted that UNFPA must be given the necessary resources and visibility. In that connection, Uganda believed that there was a case for establishing a separate executive board for UNFPA. At the same time, it supported review of the terms of reference and mandate of the Commission on Population and Development, and the proposed increase in the Commission's membership. Lastly, while recognizing the centrality of the principle of shared responsibility within the United Nations system for the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, Uganda believed that the distinct visibility of the appropriate lead agency should not be compromised.

32. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the Programme of Action gave priority to sustained economic growth and development, particularly to the eradication of poverty in developing countries. A clear link having been established between population, unsustainable production and consumption patterns and the environment, developed countries had special responsibility for changing their unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

33. While national governments had rightly been assigned the prime responsibility of formulating and implementing appropriate policies to implement the Programme of Action, their efforts must be supplemented by increased international cooperation. In that regard, the provisions of paragraph 13.16 of the Programme of Action should be translated into action.

34. Women's empowerment and their enhanced participation in development activities should receive special priority in the follow-up activities. In that connection, the Fourth World Conference on Women had re-emphasized the importance of education, primary health care and access to information.

35. Population policies and programmes should be implemented taking into account the special needs of the poor and vulnerable sections of society, and, the Bretton Woods institutions should pay more attention to the social sectors in formulating and implementing structural adjustment measures so as to ensure that economic reform measures did not adversely affect the poor. Similarly, the United Nations should continue to play an important role in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

36. His delegation believed that the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be increased and also that there was room for better coordination between the Commission, the Population Division and UNFPA.

37. Despite adverse socio-economic indicators, Bangladesh had achieved some tangible successes in the area of population, health care and primary education.

38. Mr. HOSNY (Egypt) said that his delegation supported the proposal of UNFPA to replace its biennial reports on multilateral population assistance by an annual report on the amount of financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national and international levels, as outlined in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report (A/50/190), and to refine the current system of monitoring such assistance. There might also be a need to develop a method of assessing the mobilization of domestic resources allocated for population programmes. His delegation also welcomed the steps taken pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/128 to revitalize the Population Commission, now renamed the Commission on Population and Development, and agreed that its membership should be increased from 28 to 53 and that the Commission should be granted equal status with the other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.